

how she juggled being a mom of not one, not two, not three, not four, five kids—five kids—while Harry was working as a Capitol Police officer to put himself through law school while running tough campaigns and while serving long days and nights in Washington. Needless to say, there is not much that can top that. So the Reids provided my family with the inspiration I needed as I was considering what a life in the public view would look like.

Their love for each other, their journey and ability to make it work over six decades—raising kids, keeping their love strong—showed me how important it was to have a strong family, of course, and friends as the foundation for this work of public service.

You know, we spend a lot of time here in Washington talking about politics every day, but it is the personal things at the end of the day we all know really matter, and that is the work that Senator Reid did for Nevadans. He fought to make families' lives just a little bit easier, whether they knew it or not, so that they could focus on what matters, what was most important to them.

I want to honor Senator Reid for his lifetime of fighting the good fight for our State. He helped make Nevada what it is today—a world-class destination and truly a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

I want to thank Landra and the entire Reid family for sharing their husband, their father, and their grandfather with Nevada and with the Nation. The American people have benefited so much because of their sacrifices and his willingness to serve. Thank you.

Thank you, Senator Reid.

I yield the floor.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:07 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. ROSEN).

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, on Monday, the United States set a new pandemic record with more than 1 million new cases in 24 hours. I am sure you and I and everyone who is thinking about this would have hoped we would be in a very different place right now than we are, but it is pretty significant, 2 years into the pandemic, to set that kind of record.

What is most concerning about this is many people who are concerned with catching the virus or who think they may already have it can't get access to tests. I just heard earlier today on a

call where the administration was providing information that they have asked for a request for information about who could provide a test and then made a request for proposals about who might be able to provide tests.

But we are way down the road to be asking about who can provide tests. Congress has provided more than \$80 billion for COVID testing. If you look at the size of the defense budget, this is a pretty big percentage of the defense budget.

We have lost track, I think, of how much money \$1 billion or \$1 trillion or \$80 billion is, but the administration has had \$80 billion. Over half of it, \$47 billion, they got in March in the American Rescue Plan. This is supposed to cover everything from research and development of new rapid tests to manufacturing and purchase of these tests, to funding for State and local governments to distribute these tests. Here we are 9 months later, and we are concerned that we don't have tests because we don't have enough tests.

For the last month, Americans have faced long lines at testing centers. They have gone to places where they thought they could purchase a rapid test to find empty shelves.

The question I really have is the same that many Americans have, which is what went wrong? Why are we facing such a shortage of tests now? How could we possibly have had \$80 billion available for a minimum of 9 months and now we are back in a testing problem?

I think the answer surely is not a lack of funding but, I think, more fundamentally, a lack of strategy, a lack of priority, and a failure to anticipate the ongoing testing needs by the administration.

When this administration came into office, their COVID-19 policy could have been called "Vaccines First." And while I have been vaccinated and while I have urged all Americans to get a vaccine unless your doctor tells you not to, it has always been clear to me that the vaccine was only one part of the process.

In fact, if you remember, from the very first, the vaccines were at a level that indicated that roughly 1 out of 10 people that had a vaccine would also get COVID. What we know now is that person who gets COVID that had a vaccine is not going to be incredibly affected by it, in all likelihood, but it shouldn't have been a shock that many people who got a vaccine would also get COVID and would also want to know if they had COVID.

Yet, for a full year, the administration has focused almost exclusively on one thing and testing and treatments have not had the attention they should have had or now that they must have. That failure has come at a steep cost. Today, Americans can't find over-the-counter tests, and the Nation lacks a comprehensive reliable testing infrastructure.

Early in the pandemic, former Senator Lamar Alexander and I were on the phone nearly every day with officials from the Department of Health and Human Services to get a better understanding of how to fight the virus. He was the chairman of the appropriating committee. I was the chairman of the authorizing committee. We thought we had come up with a plan that, if carried out, would work just right. In fact, the result of those conversations was a twofold testing response.

First, we started a program at the National Institutes of Health we called RADx, which we kind of based, roughly, on the TV program "Shark Tank," where people brought ideas in about how they could produce a test in ways those tests were not being produced. Over \$1 billion was invested directly with a dozen different companies that are producing today almost all of the tests that are available in stores.

But, obviously, being sure that they were producing them at the volume that they needed to be produced was something we should have been paying attention to. We wanted to bring more tests to the market. We wanted to do it as quickly as possible and provide the necessary government intervention to do so.

In the first 6 months of the RADx Program, at the end of that 6 months, they were delivering 2 million tests a day and 100 percent of all of the tests that were available for at-home testing.

Secondly, Senator Alexander and I thought that testing should be widespread and easily available, easy to take. As we pushed to reopen schools and keep them open, we want to do the things that have a test that is frequent, that is inexpensive, and makes sense. We went on and appropriated more than \$30 billion for testing activities in the first five bipartisan bills to deal with COVID.

Later, in the American Rescue Plan, an additional \$47.8 billion for testing activities was made available. Now, remember this is legislation that was partisan in nature. No Republican voted for it. It had easier transfer authority from category to category than any appropriations bill in the last 10 years, and, frankly, we sent a letter to the Secretary of HHS this week—Senator BURR and I did—asking exactly what did this money get spent on. I am afraid we are going to find out not nearly all of it got spent on testing.

The lack of funding has not been a problem, and I think we need to know what happened to the money and what we need to do to make the kind of investment now that we thought that \$80 billion would surely have made.

When people asked last month about the difficulties in getting tests and why the administration wasn't making tests free and available, the White House Press Secretary said—she just dismissed the idea out of hand. Then, less than 3 weeks later, they did an